

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY NEA/P:REUNDELAND:RGH
APPROVED BY NEA/P:REUNDELAND
NEA - MR. ATHERTON
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NEA/EGY - MR. NEWBERRY
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TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
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AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
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AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
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CINCEUR FOR POLAD, TEL AVIV FOR PAO, DELIVER BY 9 A.M.

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: BACKGROUND BRIEFING

FOLLOWING IS THE BACKGROUND PRESS BRIEFING GIVEN BY SENIOR AMERICAN OFFICIAL AT THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE THE AFTERNOON OF MARCH 11, 1978.

SENIOR AMERICAN OFFICIAL: THE PURPOSE OF THIS IS TO TAKE A LOOK AT THE STATUS OF THE NEGOTIATIONS--AT LEAST THIS IS HOW I ENVISAGE IT--AT THE POINT WHERE THE PHASE OF MY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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RECENT TRIP HAS ENDED AND THE VISIT OF PRIME MINISTER BEGIN IS BEGINNING NEXT WEEK. IT SEEMS LIKE A USEFUL POINT AT WHICH TO TAKE STOCK OF WHERE WE ARE IN THE NEGOTIATIONS AND TO LOOK AT THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE NEGOTIATIONS TO THE VISIT OF PRIME MINISTER BEGIN.

THE FIRST POINT I WOULD MAKE--IT'S AN OBVIOUS ONE, BUT WORTH REEMPHASIZING--IS THAT THE BEGIN VISIT IS PART OF A PROCESS THAT HAS BEEN GOING ON REALLY SINCE THE SADAT VISIT TO JERUSALEM, IN VARIOUS FORUMS AND AT VARIOUS LEVELS, AND A PROCESS THAT WILL GO ON AFTER THE VISIT OF THE PRIME MINISTER. THIS IS A VERY IMPORTANT STEP, OBVIOUSLY, IN THE PROCESS. WE DO HAVE SOME SERIOUS ISSUES TO DISCUSS, AND THEY WILL BE DISCUSSED FRANKLY AND OPENLY IN THE

SPIRIT OF THE KIND OF RELATIONSHIP THAT WE HAVE, AND HAVE HISTORICALLY AND TRADITIONALLY HAD, WITH ISRAEL. WE ARE AT AN IMPORTANT POINT IN THE NEGOTIATIONS.

SINCE THE SADAT VISIT TO JERUSALEM, THERE HAS BEEN ENOUGH DETAILED WORK DONE NOW IN THE TWO COMMITTEES THAT WERE SET UP AFTER THE ISMAILIA SUMMIT, THE

POLITICAL COMMITTEE AND THE SECURITY COMMITTEE, AND IN THE TALKS THAT I HAD OVER THE ALMOST-THREE-WEEK PERIOD THAT I WAS IN THE AREA, TO IDENTIFY WITH GREATER PRECISION THE POINTS ON WHICH AGREEMENT IS CLOSE AND THE POINTS WHICH ARE NOT AGREED AND THAT ARE GOING TO REQUIRE IMPORTANT DECISIONS.

JUST TO GIVE A COUPLE OF EXAMPLES OF THE KIND OF ISSUES ON WHICH DECISIONS AT SOME POINT ARE GOING TO BE NEEDED, LET ME CITE THE FOLLOWING: FIRST OF ALL, ON THE ARAB SIDE, THERE IS THE FUNDAMENTAL DECISION OF THE NATURE OF THE PEACE RELATIONS THAT WOULD EXIST BETWEEN ISRAEL AND EACH NEIGHBORING STATE, INCLUDING PEACE TREATIES WITH IT. IN THE CASE OF EGYPT, THIS HAS GONE VERY FAR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TOWARD AGREEMENT, BUT WE'RE TALKING, OBVIOUSLY, ABOUT AN EFFORT WHOSE ULTIMATE GOAL IS NOT AN AGREEMENT ON ONE FRONT, BUT A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT, AND THE QUESTION OF THE NATURE OF PEACEFUL RELATIONS IS ONE THAT WILL HAVE TO BE MADE BY EACH OF THE PARTIES TO THE COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT.

Q. HAS THAT GONE VERY FAR? YOU MEAN IN SPECIFICS?

A. YES. NEXT, OTHER ARAB GOVERNMENTS THAN EGYPT STILL HAVE TO MAKE THE DECISION ABOUT WHETHER AND WHEN AND UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES THEY WILL JOIN THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS. THERE ARE IMPORTANT DECISIONS TO BE MADE ON THE ARAB SIDE ABOUT WHAT THEY CAN DO TO ASSURE ISRAEL'S SECURITY AND SENSE OF SECURITY AS PART OF ANY SETTLEMENT.

ON THE ISRAELI SIDE, THE AREAS FOR DECISION ARE, I THINK, FAIRLY CLEAR AT THIS POINT, AS A RESULT OF RECENT DISCUSSION AND AIRING OF POSITIONS. FIRST OF ALL, THERE IS THE QUESTION OF THE APPLICABILITY OF SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 242 ON ALL FRONTS. THERE IS THE WHOLE QUESTION OF AN APPROACH TO THE PALESTINIAN-WEST BANK-GAZA SETTLEMENT WHERE WE HAVE PUT FORWARD, IN THE STATEMENT THE PRESIDENT MADE AT ASWAN, A FORMULA ON THIS ISSUE. AND, OF COURSE, THERE IS IN THE BACKGROUND THE CONTINUING DISPUTE OVER ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES,

WHICH HAS NOT BEEN A PART OF THE NEGOTIATIONS THAT I'VE BEEN INVOLVED IN, BUT IT CLEARLY AFFECTS THE ATMOSPHERE AND THE ATTITUDES TOWARD THOSE NEGOTIATIONS.

THE NEXT POINT I WOULD MAKE IS THAT THE VEHICLE FOR MOVING THE NEGOTIATIONS FORWARD WITH REGARD TO A LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT IS THE PROPOSED DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES WHICH WOULD GOVERN MORE DETAILED NEGOTIATIONS ON SPECIFIC AGREEMENTS. AND THIS WAS THE PRINCIPAL FOCUS OF MY TALKS OVER THE LAST SEVERAL WEEKS, TO TRY TO DEFINE MORE PRECISELY AREAS OF AGREEMENT AND DISAGREEMENT. AND DURING THIS LAST PERIOD, THE TEXT OF THE PROPOSED DECLARATION HAS BEEN EVOLVING. THERE IS QUITE A LOT OF AGREED LANGUAGE; THERE ARE, CLEARLY, ALSO STILL VERY IMPORTANT AREAS WHERE AGREEMENT HAS NOT BEEN ACHIEVED. I DON'T WANT TO TRY TO GET INTO TEXTUAL DETAILS AT THIS STAGE, BUT LET ME TRY TO AT LEAST EXPLAIN WHERE THE VARIOUS ISSUES THAT ARE INVOLVED IN THE DECLARATION STAND.

FIRST OF ALL, ON THE QUESTION OF THE PEACE COMMITMENTS, OF THE NEED FOR NORMAL PEACEFUL RELATIONS EMBODIED IN PEACE TREATIES, WITH ALL THE THINGS THAT "NORMAL PEACEFUL RELATIONS" IMPLY, I THINK THERE IS GENERAL AGREEMENT AS BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES THAT ARE NOW NEGOTIATING, ISRAEL AND EGYPT, ON THESE QUESTIONS.

I THINK THERE IS ALSO GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT THERE MUST BE DETAILED NEGOTIATIONS ON ADEQUATE SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS AS PART OF ANY FINAL SETTLEMENT; AND WHILE WE ARE NOT, OURSELVES, INVOLVED IN THE DISCUSSIONS IN THE SECURITY OR THE MILITARY COMMITTEE THAT HAS BEEN, UNTIL RECENTLY AT LEAST, MEETING IN CAIRO, OUR UNDERSTANDING IS THAT THERE HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLE PROGRESS MADE ON MANY OF THE ELEMENTS OF THE KIND OF SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS THAT WOULD HAVE TO BE AGREED TO AND IMPLEMENTED SO FAR AS THE SINAI AGREEMENT IS CONCERNED.

TURNING NOW TO THE WEST BANK AND GAZA ASPECTS, OBVIOUSLY THE QUESTION OF SECURITY HERE IS CONSIDERABLY MORE COMPLEX BECAUSE IT NOT ONLY INVOLVES THE USUAL QUESTION OF ARRANGEMENTS THAT WOULD GUARD AGAINST CONVENTIONAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MILITARY ATTACK, BUT ALSO THE WHOLE QUESTION OF HOW ONE ASSURES THAT IN A FINAL SETTLEMENT, YOU DO NOT CREATE A SITUATION IN WHICH RADICAL, POLITICAL GROUPS COULD TRANSFORM THE WEST BANK-GAZA AREAS INTO A BASE WHICH WOULD BECOME A SECURITY THREAT TO ISRAEL. AND IN THE TALKS THAT I HAVE BEEN CONDUCTING BETWEEN THE PARTIES,

THIS WHOLE AREA OF THE FUTURE OF THE WEST BANK AND GAZA HAS BECOME THE PRINCIPAL AND MOST DIFFICULT SUBJECT UNDER NEGOTIATION IN THE TEXT OF THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES.

I THINK THAT WE HAVE RECOGNIZED, SINCE EVEN BEFORE THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE FIRST CONVENED IN JERUSALEM IN JANUARY, THAT ISSUES AS COMPLEX AS THOSE OF THE WEST BANK AND GAZA AND THEIR FUTURE STATUS CANT BE RESOLVED BY A SIMPLE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES ALONE. IT WAS FOR THIS REASON THAT THERE WAS A SECOND AGENDA ITEM ON THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE DEALING WITH GUIDELINES FOR NEGOTIATIONS ON ISSUES RELATING TO THE WEST BANK AND GAZA.

THOSE OF YOU THAT I MET WITH BEFORE WE WENT OFF FOR THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE MEETING MAY RECALL THAT I SPENT SOME TIME DISCUSSING THE INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A PRINCIPLE IN THE DECLARATION ON PALESTINIAN-RELATED ISSUES AND THE UNDERLYING UNDERSTANDINGS THAT WOULD BE BEHIND THAT PRINCIPLE SO FAR AS THE WEST BANK-GAZA AREAS ARE CONCERNED.

ON THIS LAST TRIP, I DID BEGIN SOME PRELIMINARY EXPLORATORY DISCUSSIONS WITH THE PARTIES ON WHAT WOULD EVENTUALLY BECOME THE NEGOTIATIONS UNDER THE SECOND ITEM ON THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE AGENDA, IN AN EFFORT TO TRY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TO GET SOME IDEA OF WHAT THE PARTIES THEMSELVES SEE AS POSSIBLE FUTURE GUIDELINES FOR MORE DETAILED NEGOTIATIONS OF WEST BANK-GAZA-PALESTINIAN QUESTIONS.

IN THESE DISCUSSIONS, SEVERAL ISSUES HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED. THE CHIEF OF THESE ARE, FIRST OF ALL, WHETHER AND TO WHAT EXTENT ISRAELI FORCES WILL WITHDRAW FROM WEST BANK-GAZA AREAS; SECONDLY, HOW WILL SECURITY IN THESE AREAS BE ASSURED; AND THIRDLY, HOW WILL THE GOVERNMENT AND ULTIMATE SOVEREIGNTY IN THESE AREAS BE RESOLVED? I DON'T WANT TO LEAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT WE HAVE GOTTEN INTO A FORMAL, DETAILED NEGOTIATION ON THESE QUESTIONS YET. THIS WAS VERY MUCH PRELIMINARY AND EXPLORATORY, BUT RECOGNIZING, AS I THINK THE PARTIES DO, THAT THERE IS AN INHERENT LINK BETWEEN A PRINCIPLE DEALING WITH THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION AND THE DETAILED ARRANGEMENTS THAT WOULD GOVERN THE AREAS IN QUESTION.

THIS HAS, IN TURN, LED TO THE DISCUSSION OF AN ISSUE THAT HAS FEATURED INCREASINGLY PROMINENTLY IN THE PUBLIC DEBATE OVER THE LAST COUPLE OF WEEKS, NAMELY THE QUESTION OF THE APPLICABILITY OF SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLU-

TION 242, AND WHICH REALLY HAS GOVERNED ALL THE APPROACHES TO A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT SINCE THAT TIME. THE BASIC EQUATION WAS CLEARLY THAT IN RETURN FOR PEACE AND SECURITY, ISRAEL WOULD WITHDRAW FROM TERRITORIES OCCUPIED IN THAT CONFLICT, BUT CLEARLY ALSO LEAVING ROOM TO NEGOTIATE RECTIFICATIONS IN THE 1967 LINES.

I THINK IT IS INSTRUCTIVE ALSO TO RECALL THAT WHEN RESOLUTION 242 AND SOME OF ITS ABORTIVE PREDECESSORS WERE UNDER NEGOTIATION, THE REAL ARGUMENT WAS WHETHER OR NOT ISRAEL SHOULD BE CALLED UPON TO WITHDRAW IN CURCUMSTANCES OTHER THAN PEACE, AND THE WHOLE EFFORT WHICH WE AND OTHERS WHO SUPPORTED WHAT BECAME RESOLUTION 242 LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ENGAGED IN WAS TO HOLD THE LINE AGAINST ANY RESOLUTION THAT WOULD CALL FOR ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL, AS WAS CALLED FOR IN THE 1956-57 PERIOD, EXCEPT IN CIRCUMSTANCES OF ARAB RECOGNITION AND ACCEPTANCE OF ISRAEL'S SOVEREIGNTY, AND WILLINGNESS TO LIVE IN PEACE WITH IT. WE ALSO INSISTED AT THE TIME THAT THE LANGUAGE HAD TO HAVE ENOUGH FLEXIBILITY IN IT SO THAT THERE COULD BE CHANGES IN THE 1967 LINES. HENCE, THE WELL-KNOWN AMBIGUITY OF THE WITHDRAWAL PHRASE OF RESOLUTION 242.

Q. CAN I ASK YOU A QUESTION ABOUT THAT? YOU HAVE REFERRED TO THE TIME WHEN 242 WAS APPROVED. AT THAT TIME WAS IT OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT THE ISRAELIS ACCEPTED THE PRINCIPLE OF WITHDRAWAL ON ALL FRONTS?

A. YES.

Q. MORE SPECIFICALLY, DOES THE LEGISLATIVE HISTORY, IF THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT TO CALL IT, SHOW THAT THERE WAS DISCUSSION OF WHETHER OR NOT TO SPECIFY "ON ALL FRONTS"? IN OTHER WORDS, YOUR ANSWER TO THIS IS WHAT THE PRESIDENT HAS AID.

A. YES.

Q. BUT WHAT I'D LIKE TO KNOW IS WHETHER THERE WAS SPECIFIC DISCUSSION AT THAT POINT ABOUT BEING EXPLICIT ABOUT ON ALL FRONTS IN THE RESOLUTION, AND IF THERE WAS, WAS THERE A DECISION MADE NOT TO BE SPECIFIC?

A. THERE WAS NEVER ANY DISCUSSION OF USING A PHRASE SUCH AS "ON ALL FRONTS" IN THE RESOLUTION BECAUSE IT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WASN'T AN ISSUE. IT WAS ASSUMED IN ALL THE DISCUSSIONS

THAT WENT ON THAT WITHDRAWAL WOULD APPLY TO AT LEAST SOME PARTS OF ALL OF THE NATIONAL TERRITORIES THAT HAD BEEN OCCUPIED.

Q. SO THERE IS NO BUILT-IN AMBIGUITY AS THERE IS BY LEAVING THE ARTICLE "THE," OUT OF THE RESOLUTION, BEFORE "TERRITORY"?

A. AS A MATTER OF FACT, THAT'S MY NEXT POINT. YOU ASKED A VERY LOGICAL QUESTION AT THIS POINT.

FIRST OF ALL, WHEN 242 WAS ENACTED, THE QUESTION OF WHETHER IT REQUIRED TOTAL OR LESS THAN TOTAL WITHDRAWAL WAS LEFT DELIBERATELY OPEN. IT DOES NOT SAY, AS YOU ALL KNOW BETTER THAN ANYBODY BY THIS TIME, "FROM ALL THE TERRITORIES OCCUPIED" OR "TO THE LINES OF JUNE 4, 1967." BUT IT WAS ALSO QUITE CLEAR IN THE DISCUSSIONS THAT WERE HELD ABOUT THE RESOLUTION AT THAT TIME, AMONG THE SPONSORS, AMONG ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL, WITH THE PARTIES, INCLUDING ISRAEL, JORDAN, EGYPT -- REMEMBER, SYRIA DID NOT GET INVOLVED AT THAT TIME, BUT JORDAN WAS VERY MUCH INVOLVED, PLUS EGYPT AND ISRAEL -- AND IT WAS CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD THAT, GIVEN THE AMBIGUITY ABOUT HOW MUCH WITHDRAWAL, THERE WOULD BE WITHDRAWAL ON EACH OF THE FRONTS. IT WAS ALSO UNDERSTOOD, OF COURSE, THAT THERE WOULD HAVE TO BE SECURE AND RECOGNIZED BORDERS ON EACH OF THE FRONTS, AND THAT WITHDRAWAL WAS NOT A UNILATERAL ACT; IT WOULD NOT TAKE PLACE UNTIL THERE WAS AGREEMENT ON SECURE AND RECOGNIZED BORDERS AND ALL OF THE OTHER ASPECTS OF THE PEACE SETTLEMENT, INCLUDING SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS, PEACE COMMITMENTS, AND SO FORTH.

THE RECORD ALSO SHOWS, I THINK VERY CLEARLY, THAT
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PREVIOUS ISRAELI GOVERNMENTS HAVE ACCEPTED THIS VIEW. I DON'T KNOW HOW MANY OF YOU FOLLOW THE ARTICLES AND THE DEBATE THAT IS GOING ON IN THE MEDIA TODAY IN ISRAEL, BUT ABBA EBAN WROTE A PIECE FOR THE "JERUSALEM POST" A WEEK OR SO AGO, IN WHICH HE MADE EXPLICITLY THE POINT THAT THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENTS WHICH WERE INVOLVED IN ACCEPTING RESOLUTION 242 AND AGREEING TO NEGOTIATE ON THE

BASIS OF 242 ALL ACCEPTED THE INTERPRETATION THAT THE PRINCIPLE OF WITHDRAWAL, AS WELL AS ALL THE OTHER PRINCIPLES OF THAT RESOLUTION, DID APPLY ON ALL THE FRONTS WHERE TERRITORIES HAD BEEN OCCUPIED IN '67.

THE PRESENT ISRAELI GOVERNMENT DID STATE IN JUNE OF LAST YEAR THAT IT ACCEPTED RESOLUTION 242 AS THE BASIS

FOR NEGOTIATIONS, THEREBY IN EFFECT REAFFIRMING THE COMMITMENTS OF ITS PREDECESSOR THAT NEGOTIATIONS WOULD BE BASED ON RESOLUTION 242.

Q. BUT THAT'S NOT THE ISSUE, IS IT?

A. NO. IT'S THE ISSUE OF HOW YOU INTERPRET ITS APPLICATION. WHAT HAS HAPPENED SINCE THEN IS THAT THIS BEGAN TO EMERGE AS A CLEAR PROBLEM IN PUBLIC DEBATE WHEN THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT PUT FORWARD ITS PROPOSAL FOR A SELF-RULE PLAN ON THE WEST BANK AND GAZA, AND IN THE CONTEXT OF THAT, IT ASSERTED THAT IT HAD A CLAIM TO SOVEREIGNTY IN THESE AREAS, STATING THAT THE CLAIM TO SOVEREIGNTY WOULD BE PUT IN ABEYANCE FOR A FIVE-YEAR PERIOD, AFTER WHICH THERE WOULD BE A REVIEW OF THE SELF-RULE PLAN, BUT THAT IT WOULD NOT RELINQUISH THAT CLAIM TO SOVEREIGNTY. THAT, IN TURN, LED TO QUESTIONS AS TO WHETHER OR NOT ISRAEL IN EFFECT ACCEPTED THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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INTERPRETATION OF ITS PREDECESSORS WITH REGARD TO THE WITHDRAWAL PROVISIONS OF RESOLUTION 242 ON ALL FRONTS. THIS, IN TURN, HAS BECOME AN ISSUE IN THE NEGOTIATIONS BECAUSE IT RAISES QUESTIONS ABOUT THE MEANING OF THE WITHDRAWAL LANGUAGE AND THE PALESTINIAN-WEST BANK-GAZA LANGUAGE; AND, PARTICULARLY, IN THE DECLARATION, IT RAISES QUESTIONS AS TO WHETHER THERE ARE DIFFERING INTERPRETATIONS BY EGYPT, ON THE ONE HAND, AND ISRAEL ON THE OTHER, AS TO WHAT THE GENERAL LANGUAGE OF THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES MEANS. SO THIS DEBATE THAT HAS INCREASINGLY COME TO THE FORE OVER WHETHER OR NOT 242 APPLIES TO THE WEST BANK AND GAZA BECOMES A CRITICAL FACTOR IN GETTING AGREEMENT NOW ON THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES AND ON GETTING ULTIMATE AGREEMENT ON THE KIND OF GUIDELINES FOR WEST BANK-GAZA NEGOTIATIONS THAT WOULD, PRESUMABLY, HAVE TO BE THE NEXT STEP IN THE NEGOTIATIONS AFTER THE PRINCIPLES THEMSELVES ARE AGREED ON.

Q. HAVE YOU BEEN TOLD CATEGORICALLY BY THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT THAT THIS GOVERNMENT DOES NOT ACCEPT 242 AS APPLYING TO THE WEST BANK AND GAZA?

A. THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL STATEMENTS OF THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT POSITION AND THE MOST RECENT AND MOST AUTHORITATIVE WAS DAYAN'S STATEMENT IN THE KNESSET, LAST WEEK OR SO, IN WHICH HE REAFFIRMED THE GOVERNMENT'S ACCEPTANCE OF 242 AS THE BASIS FOR THE NEGOTIATIONS; BUT THEN HE WENT ON TO SAY, "BUT OF COURSE, 242 HAS DIFFERING INTERPRETATIONS," AND IT WAS CLEAR IN THE

CONTEXT THAT HE WAS REFERRING TO THE DIFFERENCE IN INTERPRETATION OF WHETHER OR NOT IT APPLIES TO THE WEST BANK AND GAZA. IN OUR PRIVATE DISCUSSIONS, THIS HAS BEEN EVEN MORE EXPLICIT.

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Q. CAN I ASK THE QUESTION AGAIN? HAVE YOU BEEN TOLD CATEGORICALLY BY THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT THAT THIS GOVERNMENT DOES NOT ACCEPT THE PRINCIPLE THAT 242 WOULD APPLY TO THE WEST BANK AND GAZA?

A. YES, I THINK THAT'S FAIR TO SAY.

Q. BY MR. BEGIN OR BY SOMEBODY ELSE?

A. I DON'T WANT TO GET INTO THE SPECIFICS OF WHO HAS SAID WHAT TO WHOM HERE. BUT AT THE SAME TIME, THEY HAVE SAID, "THAT DOES NOT MEAN THAT IN THE NEGOTIATIONS, WE WOULD NOT AGREE THAT THE ARABS COULD PUT ON THE TABLE A PROPOSAL FOR WITHDRAWAL, AND WE WOULD BE WILLING TO DISCUSS ANY PROPOSALS THEY PUT FORWARD, AS WELL AS ANY PROPOSALS WE PUT FORWARD." WHAT, BASICALLY, I THINK THEY ARE SAYING IS THAT THEY DO NOT WANT TO AGREE IN ADVANCE TO THE PRINCIPLE OF WITHDRAWAL FROM THESE AREAS, AS IS INHERENT IN WHAT WE HAVE CONSIDERED THE UNIVERSALLY ACCEPTED INTERPRETATION UP TO NOW OF RESOLUTION 242.

Q. ARE WE SAYING THAT UNLESS THEY DO AGREE TO THE PRINCIPLE OF AT LEAST SOME WITHDRAWAL, THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS CANNOT BE BROADENED, CANNOT GO ON?

A. I THINK WHAT WE'RE SAYING IS, THIS FURTHER COMPLICATES THE PROBLEM OF ACHIEVING A DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES THAT WILL BE AGREED TO IN THE FIRST INSTANCE BY EGYPT WHO IS THE OTHER PARTY TO THIS NEGOTIATION, AND IN THE SECOND INSTANCE, WILL BE CONSIDERED AN ACCEPTABLE BASIS FOR BROADENING THE NEGOTIATIONS. WE'RE SAYING THAT THIS DOES COMPLICATE THE PROBLEM OF , FIRST OF ALL,
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TRYING TO GET A DECLARATION, AND SECONDLY, OF TRYING TO ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO JOIN THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS AT THAT STAGE.

Q. WHEN YOU SAY "COMPLICATE," YOU MEAN, JUST COMPLICATE?

A. YES.

Q. YOU MEAN YOU COULD HAVE A DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

IF ISRAEL HELD TO THIS LINE?

A. WE'RE NOT AT THE END OF THE NEGOTIATIONS YET, SO I DON'T WANT TO SAY, CATEGORICALLY, THAT WAYS CAN'T BE FOUND TO DEVISE A FORMULA THAT WILL OVERCOME THIS. BUT AT THIS POINT, IT HAS CLEARLY BECOME A MAJOR ISSUE IN GETTING TO A DECLARATION; BUT UNTIL WE'VE HAD FURTHER DISCUSSIONS, INCLUDING DURING MR. BEGIN'S VISIT, I DON'T WANT TO SAY, CATEGORICALLY, THAT THIS IS SOMETHING THAT IS NOT RESOLVABLE. THAT'S WHY I CHOSE TO SAY IT COMPLICATED THE --

LET ME JUST MAKE A COUPLE MORE POINTS HERE BECAUSE I WANT TO GIVE A BALANCED SORT OF BACKGROUND FOR YOUR QUESTIONS.

I THINK IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT TO EMPHASIZE THAT THE WITHDRAWAL ENVISAGED UNDER RESOLUTION 242 -- AND AGAIN, I THINK THIS IS PART OF THE TOTALITY OF THE FORMULA THAT 242 POSTULATES -- THE WITHDRAWAL HAS TO BE BALANCED BY MEASURES WHICH WOULD ALSO INSURE ISRAEL'S SECURITY AND ITS VITAL INTERESTS, AND THAT THIS KIND OF DETAILED AND MUTUALLY SATISFACTORY AND MUTUALLY AGREED ARRANGEMENT CAN ONLY BE DEVELOPED IN THE COURSE OF NEGOTIATING THE DETAILED POLITICAL AND MILITARY ARRANGEMENTS IN THE WEST

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BANK AND GAZA WHICH WOULD COME FROM AN AGREEMENT WITH REGARD TO THOSE AREAS. IN OTHER WORDS, IT HAS TO BE UNDERSTOOD THAT NOT ONLY THE PRINCIPLE OF WITHDRAWAL WOULD APPLY, BUT ALSO THE PRINCIPLE OF SECURITY, OF SECURE AND RECOGNIZED BOUNDARIES, AND OF PEACE COMMITMENTS ALL HAVE TO APPLY -- A PACKAGE IN EFFECT, APPLIED TO THIS AREA AS WELL AS TO ANY OTHER AREAS.

THE NEXT-TO-FINAL POINT I WOULD MAKE IS THAT THERE SEEMS TO BE INCREASING ACCEPTANCE AMONG THE NEGOTIATING PARTIES OF THE CONCEPT THAT ONE PROBABLY NEEDS AN INTERIM PERIOD, OR INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS, WITH REGARD TO THE WEST BANK AND GAZA BEFORE THERE CAN BE A FINAL SETTLEMENT WORKED OUT AND IMPLEMENTED.

Q. YOU MEAN "AMONG" OR "BETWEEN"?

A. AT THIS POINT, IT IS BETWEEN.

Q. JORDAN DOESN'T --

A. BUT I WOULD SAY THAT FROM THE BASIS OF MY DISCUSSIONS

WITH THE JORDANIANS -- ALTHOUGH THEY HAVE NOT JOINED THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS, I DID GO TO AMMAN ON THIS TRIP AND TALKED TO THEM ABOUT THE STATUS OF NEGOTIATIONS AND THE ISSUES AND THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARDS THEM -- I THINK IT IS FAIR TO SAY THEY ALSO ACCEPT, THE JORDANIANS ACCEPT THE CONCEPT OF AN INTERIM ARRANGEMENT. FOR THIS THERE IS A PROPOSAL ON THE TABLE -- THE BEGIN PROPOSAL FOR SELF-RULE IS A PROPOSAL FOR AN INTERIM PERIOD. IT SAYS THAT AT THE END OF FIVE YEARS, THIS WILL BE REVIEWED. IT HAS NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE ARABS AS AN ACCEPTABLE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BASIF FOR AN INTERIM ARRANGEMENT, PER SE, BUT I THINK ONE HAS TO ALSO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT IT IS A SPECIFIC ATTEMPT TO DEAL WITH THIS PROBLEM IN WAYS THAT DON'T FORECLOSE AN ULTIMATE, NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT.

Q. UNDER WHAT CONDITIONS TO YOU THINK HUSSEIN WOULD BE WILLING TO JOIN THE PROCESS? WHAT DOES HE NEED, IN YOUR VIEW?

A. HUSSEIN, CLEARLY, HAS KEPT OPEN HIS OPTIONS. HE HAS SAID THAT IN EFFECT, HE WANTS TO WAIT AND SEE WHAT COMES OUT OF THIS PHASE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS. I DON'T REALLY THINK IT'S POSSIBLE TO SAY -- AND I'M NOT SURE HE HIMSELF WANTS TO LOCK HIMSELF IN THAT RIGIDLY AT THIS POINT -- AS TO WHAT HE WOULD REQUIRE. HE WANTS TO MAKE A JUDGMENT AT SOME POINT BASED UPON A WHOLE COMPLEX OF THINGS, INCLUDING WHAT THE DECLARATION SAYS, WHAT HIS JUDGMENT OF THE PROSPECTS FOR REAL PROGRESS ARE, AND SO FORTH. HE CLEARLY HAS NOT CLOSED OFF THE OPTION, BUT HE CLEARLY ALSO HAS NOT MADE ANY COMMITMENT AT THIS POINT. I WOULD SAY THE ONLY WAY REALLY TO DESCRIBE HUSSEIN'S POSITION IS THAT HE IS IN A "WAIT AND SEE" POSTURE THAT IS

BASICALLY SUPPORTIVE OF THE PRESENT NEGOTIATIONS IN THE SENSE THAT HE HOPES THEY SUCCEED, BUT HE IS NOT MAKING HIS OWN COMMITMENT AT THIS POINT.

Q. IS THERE ANOTHER POINT?

A. THIS IS NOT NEW; YOU'VE ALL HEARD IT BEFORE. BUT I DO WANT TO SAY THAT WHILE WE HAVE ALWAYS SAID THAT WE WILL KEEP OPEN AN OPTION FOR MAKING AMERICAN SUGGESTIONS WITH REGARD TO WAYS OF CLOSING THE GAPS, AT POINTS WHERE WE THINK THIS COULD HAVE A MEANINGFUL EFFECT ON THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS, WE'RE NOT TALKING HERE IN TERMS OF TRYING TO IMPOSE AMERICAN FORMULAS OR AMERICAN BLUEPRINTS. THE BLUEPRINTS AND THE DETAILED AGREEMENTS DO HAVE TO COME LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OUT OF THE PROCESS OF NEGOTIATIONS.

WE THINK THAT, IF YOU COULD GET AN AGREED DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES, THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS WOULD HAVE A NEW BASIS FROM WHICH IT COULD PROCEED.

Q. COULD YOU EXPLAIN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN YOUR SAYING A MINUTE AGO INCREASED ACCEPTANCE FOR THE NEED OF AN INTERIM SETTLEMENT AND THAT THE BEGIN PLAN IS AN INTERIM PLAN?

NOW, DOES THIS MEAN INCREASED ACCEPTANCE FOR THE IDEA OF THE BEGIN PLAN?

A. NO; I DON'T WANT TO LEAVE THAT IMPRESSION. IT MEANS THAT THE CONCEPT THAT YOU DON'T TRY TO GO DIRECTLY TO A FINAL SETTLEMENT OF THE PALESTINIAN-WEST BANK-GAZA QUESTIONS HAS BEEN ACCEPTED BY EGYPT AND BY ISRAEL, AND IN MY DISCUSSIONS I THINK ALSO BY THE JORDANIANS.

THE CONCEPT OF THE NEED FOR AN INTERIM PERIOD HAS I THINK CLEARLY BEEN ACCEPTED, BUT THE ARABS -- BOTH THE EGYPTIANS AND THE JORDANIANS -- CONTINUE TO SAY THAT THEY DON'T SEE THE BEGIN PLAN AS A BASIS FOR SUCH AN INTERIM AGREEMENT.

Q. WELL, WHAT SORT OF BASIS WOULD THERE BE? IS THERE SOME MODIFICATION OF IT OR WHAT KIND OF PLAN ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT THEN?

A. WELL, AS I SAID, WE'VE HAD ONLY VERY EXPLORATORY DISCUSSIONS WITH THEM; AND IN THE END THEY'RE GOING TO HAVE TO INDICATE WHAT THEY THINK IS GOING TO BE ACCEPTABLE. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AND THIS UP TO NOW HAS CLEARLY NOT BEEN THE CASE. BUT, CLEARLY, ONE FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENT WOULD BE TO KNOW THAT THE APPLICABILITY OF RESOLUTION 242 AND THE PRINCIPLE OF WITHDRAWALS TO THESE AREAS IS ACCEPTED BY ISRAEL.

Q. BUT WHY DO YOU THINK THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT IN EFFECT RENEGED ON A COMMITMENT AS THEY DID? WHAT COMBINATION OF FACTORS?

A. YOU USED THE WORD "RENEGED."

Q. THAT'S RIGHT. I DID THAT DELIBERATELY.

A. IT'S CONSISTENT, OF COURSE, WITH THE VIEW THAT MR. BEGIN HAS HELD PERSONALLY OVER THE WHOLE PERIOD. I MEAN IT HAS BEEN HIS VIEW FROM THE BEGINNING.

I'LL GO BACK TO THE DECISION BY BEGIN WHEN HE WAS A MEMBER OF THE COALITION GOVERNMENT AFTER THE '67 WAR TO PULL OUT OF THAT GOVERNMENT IN AUGUST OF 1970. AND HE MADE VERY CLEAR THAT IT WAS IN RESPONSE TO THE FORMULA THAT WE HAD PROPOSED FOR RESUMING THE NEGOTIATIONS OF THE JARRING MISSION. IT WAS A TWO-POINT PROPOSAL -- ONE, CALLING FOR A CEASE-FIRE; AND, SECONDLY, A FORMULA FOR GETTING THE NEGOTIATIONS STARTED UNDER JARRING'S AUSPICES. IT INCLUDED ACCEPTANCE OF 242 AND A WILLINGNESS TO CARRY OUT 242 IN ALL ITS PARTS. MR. BEGIN, IN ANNOUNCING HIS WITHDRAWAL FROM THE GOVERNMENT, SAID THAT HE WAS WITHDRAWING BECAUSE THIS CLEARLY MEANT THAT THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT WAS EXPRESSING ITS WILLINGNESS TO WITHDRAW FROM JUDEA AND SAMARIA. HE DIDN'T ACKNOWLEDGE THAT 242 MEANT THAT. HE SAID THAT WAS THAT ISRAELI GOVERNMENT'S INTERPRETATION AND HE WASN'T ACCEPTING THAT INTERPRETATION. BUT HE'S BEEN QUITE CONSISTENT.

Q. WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO GET OUT OF THIS MEETING TO MAKE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IT A USEFUL ONE? YOU SAY IT'S A VERY IMPORTANT THING. WHAT ARE THE VERY IMPORTANT RESULTS?

A. WELL, OF COURSE, I INDICATED THE KIND OF ISSUES THAT I THINK WILL HAVE TO BE DISCUSSED.

Q. YES, BUT HOW DO YOU EXPECT IT WILL COME OUT?

A. I EXPECT THAT THERE WILL BE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR EACH -- FOR THE PRESIDENT AND BEGIN -- FOR EACH TO HEAR THE OTHER'S VIEWS ON THE ISSUES.

LET ME SAY WHAT I DON'T EXPECT TO COME OUT. I DON'T SEE THIS, FOR EXAMPLE, AS A MEETING OUT OF WHICH THERE'S GOING TO BE A RESOLUTION OF ALL OF THESE FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES. I DON'T THINK THAT THAT WOULD BE A REALISTIC EXPECTATION. IT WOULD BE A VERY NICE OUTCOME IF IT WERE POSSIBLE, BUT I DON'T MYSELF THINK THAT, IN THE COURSE OF TWO DAYS OF TALKS, THEY'RE GOING TO RESOLVE THE NEGOTIATIONS OVER THE ASWAN LANGUAGE IN THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES OR THE APPLICABILITY OF 242.

Q. YOU DO NOT?

A. I DO NOT EXPECT IN THE COURSE OF TWO DAYS THAT THEY'RE GOING TO RESOLVE THE ISSUES.

Q. DOES THAT MEAN YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO GO BACK TO SHUTTLING IN THE MIDDLE EAST AGAIN?

A. WELL, AS I SAID, THIS IS A STEP IN A LONG AND ONGOING PROCESS; AND I WOULD ASSUME THAT AT SOME POINT I WILL GO BACK.

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Q. YOU'VE BEEN DOING THIS FOR FOUR YEARS NOW. WHY?

A. WELL, A NUMBER OF THINGS MAKE IT IMPORTANT. FIRST OF ALL, WE ARE IN A NEW BALLGAME, IN A VERY IMPORTANT RESPECT. WE'RE IN THE POST-SADAT VISIT TO JERUSALEM PERIOD, WHICH I DON'T THINK ANYONE DENIES WAS A VERY SIGNIFICANT DEMONSTRATION OF A WILLINGNESS ON THE PART OF EGYPT TO NEGOTIATE DIRECTLY AND TO TALK ABOUT PEACE IN THE FULL SENSE OF THE WORD. OUR JUDGMENT HAS BEEN THAT THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT OPPORTUNITY THAT THERE'S BEEN IN 30 YEARS TO TRY TO GET PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST, AND THERE ARE CERTAIN DIFFICULTIES THAT HAVE ARISEN. THEY'VE BEEN DISCUSSED ALREADY IN DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS AND DURING MY TALKS ON THE TRIP, BUT THERE HAS NOT BEEN A DISCUSSION BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND PRIME MINISTER BEGIN SINCE DECEMBER, AND THERE'S BEEN AN EVOLUTION OF THE SITUATION SINCE THEN.

WE'RE WELL INTO THE LANGUAGE OF THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES. WE'VE GOT THE ISSUE OF THE APPLICABILITY OF 242, WHICH HAS BECOME SHARPENED SINCE THEN. THERE'S A

NEED TO UPDATE THE UNDERSTANDING OF EACH SIDE OF THE OTHER'S VIEWS AT THE TOP, WHERE THE DECISIONS ULTIMATELY ARE GOING TO HAVE TO BE MADE; AND THERE'S REALLY NO SUBSTITUTE FOR HAVING FROM TIME TO TIME DIRECT MEETINGS AT THE TOP.

IF YOU ASKED ME, WOULD THERE BE ANY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WHETHER THIS VISIT TAKES PLACE OR IT DOESN'T TAKE PLACE, I THINK IT'S OBVIOUS THAT IT MAKES A DIFFERENCE.

Q. COULD I TRY TO SHARPEN IT UP? YOU TALK ABOUT ASWAN AND THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES. WHEN LAST WE TALKED ABOUT THIS THE ASWAN PRINCIPLES WERE THREE PARTS ESSENTIALLY, WHICH ACTUALLY WAS STRETCHED OUT INTO KIND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF A LONGER DRAFT DECLARATION.

THE DIFFERENCES OVER 242 -- DO THEY COME UP IN THE CONTEXT OF THE TERRITORIAL CLAUSES OF THAT -- THAT ISRAEL SHOULD -- IN ACCORDANCE WITH 242, ISRAEL SHOULD WITHDRAW? I MEAN IS THIS AN EFFORT TO BE MORE SPECIFIC -- TO ADD THAT PHRASE THAT'S IN THE SADAT COMMUNIQUE ON ALL FRONTS TO THAT PART?

AND THEN, THIRDLY, YOU DIDN'T TALK TOO MUCH ABOUT THE DIFFERENCES OVER THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION THAT THE ASWAN FORMULA HAS RATHER CERTAIN LANGUAGE ABOUT. HAS THAT PART BEEN WORKED OUT OR ARE THERE STILL DIFFERENCES?

A. THE PRINCIPLE DIFFERENCE IN THE DECLARATION DRAFTS AT THE PRESENT TIME IS OVER THE PALESTINIAN LANGUAGE. BUT THERE IS ALSO A DIFFERENCE OVER THE WITHDRAWAL LANGUAGE. AND BOTH OF THEM IN A WAY RELATE TO THE DIFFERING INTERPRETATIONS OF 242 -- WITHDRAWAL, CLEARLY; BUT ALSO THE PRINCIPLE WITH REGARD TO A SETTLEMENT OF THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION HAS TO BE INTERPRETATED AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF WHETHER OR NOT ONE ENVISAGES, AT LEAST IN PRINCIPLE, WITHDRAWAL FROM THESE PALESTINIAN-INHABITED TERRITORIES.

THE DIFFERENCE OVER 242 AND ITS APPLICABILITY HAS RELEVANCE BOTH TO THE WITHDRAWAL LANGUAGE IN THE DECLARATION AND TO THE PALESTINIAN LANGUAGE.

THE ASWAN FORMULA SPOKE OF THE NEED FOR A JUST SOLUTION OF THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM IN ALL ITS ASPECTS. "ALL ITS ASPECTS" CLEARLY REFERS BOTH TO THE REFUGEE ASPECT AND THE TERRITORIAL ASPECT. IT SPOKE OF THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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RIGHT OF THE PALESTINIANS TO PARTICIPATE IN DETERMINING
THEIR FUTURE.

AND SO NO MATTER HOW YOU COME AT IT, THE QUESTION OF HOW
ONE INTERPRETS 242 WITH RESPECT TO THESE AREAS AFFECTS
THE NEGOTIATION OF LANGUAGE ON BOTH WITHDRAWAL AND THE
PALESTINIAN QUESTION.

Q. YOU SAY YOU'RE KEEPING OPEN THE OPTION OF PRESENTING
AN AMERICAN STATEMENT. SUPPOSING THE ISRAELIS HANG
TOUGH ON THE WEST BANK ISSUE DURING THESE TWO DAYS OF
TALKS. IS IT ENVISIONED THEN YOU WILL, AS A MEANS OF
BREAKING WHAT APPEARS TO BE AN UNRESOLVABLE DEADLOCK
COME FORWARD WITH YOUR OWN IDEAS?

A. WE HAVEN'T MADE ANY SUCH DECISION UP TO THIS POINT.

Q. IS THAT THE SORT OF OPPORTUNITY OR IS THAT THE KIND
OF SITUATION THAT YOU WOULD SEIZE?

A. IF YOU'RE ASKING WHETHER I WOULD ENVISAGE OUR PUTTING
FORTH A PROPOSAL TO TRY TO BREAK THE DEADLOCK DURING
THIS VISIT, I WOULD SAY NO. I DON'T SEE THAT. I SEE THIS

AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO AIR AND DISCUSS THE ISSUES BROADLY,
BUT I WOULD NOT EXPECT THAT WE WOULD BE TRYING TO RESOLVE
THE SPECIFIC QUESTIONS OF TEXTUAL DIFFERENCE AT THIS
POINT.

Q. WHY NOT?

A. BECAUSE I THINK THAT IT, FIRST OF ALL, WOULD NOT BE
FEASIBLE FOR MR. BEGIN, COMING HERE FOR THIS KIND OF
A MEETING. HE HAS A PARLIAMENTARY AND A POLITICAL SYSTEM
AT HOME. HE WOULD NEED TO HAVE TO DISCUSS IT WITH HIS
OWN CABINET AND WITH HIS GOVERNMENT.

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Q. I DON'T MEAN THAT FOR MR. BEGIN'S CONCURRENCE HERE.
IN THE CONTEXT OF A CARTER-BEGIN MEETING, WOULD THE
PRESIDENT PUT FORTH SUGGESTIONS, WHICH ISSUES BEGIN
WOULD THEN TAKE BACK FOR CONSIDERATION AT HOME?

A. I GUESS ON THAT ONE I SIMPLY CANNOT ANSWER YOU BECAUSE

THE TALKS HAVEN'T TAKEN PLACE YET, AND I THINK A LOT WILL DEPEND ON HOW THE TALKS WILL EVOLVE. SO I'M NOT IN A POSITION -- NOT BECAUSE I DON'T WANT TO TELL YOU BUT BECAUSE I REALLY DON'T THINK ANYONE COULD TELL AT THIS POINT -- TO SAY PRECISELY HOW AND HOW FAR THESE TALKS WILL EVOLVE DURING THE TWO DAYS. WE EXPECT FREE-FLOWING, OPEN, "LET'S-GET-EVERYTHING-ON-THE-TABLE" KIND OF TALKS.

BUT, CLEARLY, THE PRIMARY PURPOSE IS NOT TO TRY TO NEGOTIATE SPECIFIC LANGUAGE THAT WILL SOLVE EXISTING PROBLEMS BUT TO TRY TO GET AT THE CONCEPTS BEHIND THE DIFFERENCES AND SEE WHETHER OR NOT WAYS CAN BE FOUND TO TRY TO OVERCOME THOSE DIFFERENCES WHERE THEY EXIST.

Q. WHAT'S YOUR READING OF HOW SERIOUS BEGIN'S PROBLEMS ARE IN HIS OWN GOVERNMENT, IN HIS OWN PARTY, AND WHAT IMPACT THAT HAS ON HIS ATTITUDE WHEN HE'S HERE?

A. I REALLY WOULD RATHER NOT GET INTO AN ATTEMPT TO ANALYZE THE INTERNAL ISRAELI DOMESTIC SITUATION. I THINK THAT YOU ALL READ THE PUBLIC DEBATE GOING ON TODAY IN ISRAEL. AND I JUST DON'T THINK IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE FOR ME, EVEN IN A BACKGROUND SESSION, TO GET INTO THIS.

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Q. WELL, YOU WERE INITIALLY TRYING TO ASSESS IN SOME SAY -- YOU KNOW, WHAT EFFECT IT COULD HAVE ON HIM WHILE HE'S HERE.

A. WELL, OBVIOUSLY, PART OF THE JOB OF TRYING TO CONDUCT DIPLOMACY IS TRYING TO UNDERSTAND THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL DYNAMICS IN ANY COUNTRY INVOLVED; AND I WOULD NOT BE VERY CREDIBLE IF I SAID THAT THIS WASN'T PART OF OUR --

Q. WELL, CAN'T YOU GIVE US --

Q. COULD I ASK A SPECIFIC QUESTION? SOME OF THE ISRAELIS HERE HAVE BEEN SAYING THAT FOR BEGIN TO ACCEPT THE APPLICABILITY NOW OF 242 TO THE WEST BANK SPECIFICALLY WOULD BE A CATASTROPHE FOR HIM -- A ROOT CHALLENGE -- WOULD PROBABLY DOWN THE GOVERNMENT. IS THAT YOUR VIEW OR NOT? CAN HE SERVE UP POLITICAL --

A. NO MATTER HOW YOU COME OUT ON THAT QUESTION, I'M AFRAID I'M JUST GOING TO HAVE TO -- I'M AFRAID I'M NOT GOING TO GET INVOLVED IN ANY ANALYSIS OF THE ISRAELI

DOMESTIC SCENE.

Q. HOW DO YOU READ THE ATMOSPHERE, GOING INTO THIS MEETING? FOR EXAMPLE, DAYAN HAS SAID PUBLICLY THAT HE EXPECTS THIS TO BE -- TO USE HIS WORDS -- "THE ROUGHEST AND MOST DIFFICULT MEETING THAT BEGIN HAS EVER HAD WITH THE UNITED STATES"; AND WEIZMAN HERE YESTERDAY TALKED OF A "RATHER TENSE" RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE UNITED STATES.

NIW, THIS IS THEIR VIEW OF WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE A FEW DAYS BEFORE. BUT AS MEETINGS LIKE THIS GET UNDER WAY AND AS YOU APPROACH THE TIME TO SIT DOWN, PEOPLE USUALLY COOL OFF A BIT. NOW, HOW DO YOU READ IT?
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A. I READ IT AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE EXTREMELY FRANK, OPEN DISCUSSIONS; B UT I DO NOT READ IT AS AN OCCASION FOR CONFRONTATIONAL DISCUSSIONS. I THINK IN THE KIND OF RELATIONSHIP WE AND THE ISRAELIS HAVE -- AND WE'VE HAD DIFFERENCES BEFORE -- WE CAN DISCUSS THEM WITH BOTH SIDES UNDERSTANDING THAT IT'S WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF A RELATIONSHIP THAT HAS BEEN VERY ENDURING AND WILL CONTINUE TO ENDURE.

Q. ON 242, MAY I TRY A SHORT SERIES OF HELPFUL QUESTIONS ON 242? FROM THE AMERICAN VIEWPOINT, IF YOU DON'T GET FROM BEGIN YOUR INTERPRETATION OF 242, WHAT THEN? IS IT YOUR VIEW THAT NEGOTIATIONS CANNOT PROCEED WITH EGYPT, OR CAN THEY ON THE BASIS OF HOW YOU OUTLINE ISRAEL'S POSITION THAT THEY'RE WILLING TO DISCUSS WITHDRAWAL AT THE

TABLE?

A. I THINK THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH EGYPT HAVE TO CONTINUE. IT WOULD BE A GREAT SETBACK IF THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS THAT STARTED IN NOVEMBER AND HAS GONE THROUGH A NUMBER OF PHASES -- INCLUDING THE CAIRO CONFERENCE, THE TWO COMMITTEES MEETING, THE SECOND MEETING BETWEEN BEGIN AND SADAT IN ISMAILIA --IF THIS WHOLE PROCESS AND THE DYNAMICS THAT WERE SET IN MOTION WERE ALLOWED TO WITHER.

I THINK THE NEGOTIATIONS HAVE TO GO ON. BUT, CLEARLY, WHETHER THEY DO ON WITHOUT RAPID PROGRESS OR IF THEY BEGIN TO MAKE MORE RAPID PROGRESS IS GOING TO BE DETERMINED BY WHETHER THIS ISSUE CAN BE RESOLVED. BUT IF IT ISN'T RESOLVED IMMEDIATELY, IT DOESN'T MEAN THAT
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IT IS NEVER GOING TO BE RESOLVED.

AND THAT'S THE PURPOSE OF A NEGOTIATING PROCESS. IT MEANS YOU KEEP WORKING AT IT AND GIVE PEOPLE A CHANCE TO RECONSIDER THEIR POSITIONS AND MAKE THE HARD DECISIONS THAT GOVERNMENTS HAVE TO MAKE WHEN THEY COME TO CERTAIN POINTS IN NEGOTIATIONS.

IF GOVERNMENTS WANT TO GO ON BADLY ENOUGH, THEY'VE GOT TO MAKE A CHOICE OF THIS AGAINST THAT.

Q. BUT BY "NEGOTIATIONS" I MEANT NOT THE KIND OF INDIRECT NEGOTIATIONS YOU'RE CONDUCTING. I MEANT TO GET THE POLITICAL, DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS GOING. CAN THEY NOT GET GOING AGAIN UNLESS ISRAEL ACCEPTS THE U.S. VIEW OF 242, OR CAN THEY GET GOING AND THE ISSUE OF WITHDRAWAL BE NEGOTIATED THERE?

AND I ASK WHAT THE AMERICANS WOULD LIKE TO SEE OR HOW THE AMERICANS SEE IT.

A. WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE DIRECT TALKS RESUME AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. BUT, REALISTICALLY, I DON'T THINK THEY'RE GOING TO RESUME UNTIL THERE IS SOME PROGRESS ON THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES. AND, AS I'VE ALREADY INDICATED, ONE OF THE PROBLEMS IN MAKING PROGRESS ON THE DECLARATION IS THE DIFFERENCE IN INTERPRETATIONS AT THIS POINT OF WHETHER OR NOT RESOLUTION 242 APPLIES TO THE WEST BANK.

Q. NO, BUT I UNDERSTOOD YOU BEFORE -- YOU WERE ASKED SPECIFICALLY ABOUT THE DECLARATION; AND I'M NOT ASKING YOU

WHETHER ISRAEL HAS TO ACCEPT IN THE DECLARATION, WHEN BEGIN IS HERE, THE AMERICAN CONCEPT OF 242. I'M ASKING DOES BEGIN HAVE TO TELL JIMMY CARTER: "WE ACCEPT YOUR NOTION OF 242" FOR THERE TO BE A RESUMPTION OF DIRECT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN EGYPT AND -- WELL, I KNOW IT'S HARDER TO GET IT ON PAPER THAN TO GET IT SPOKEN.

A. WELL, IF HE DID ACCEPT THAT, IT WOULD CLEARLY MAKE IT POSSIBLE TO MOVE AHEAD MORE RAPIDLY ON THE DECLARATION. BUT I DON'T WANT TO SAY THAT THE REVERSE IS TRUE, THAT FAILING THAT IT ISN'T STILL GOING TO BE POSSIBLE TO

MAKE PROGRESS ON THE DECLARATION. THAT IS A DECISION THAT ULTIMATELY THE EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT IS GOING TO HAVE TO MAKE.

Q. BUT FAILING THAT, THERE CAN'T BE REAL NEGOTIATIONS, YOU SAID.

A. WELL, UP TO NOW AT LEAST, THE EGYPTIAN APPROACH HAS BEEN THAT THEY WOULD LIKE TO SEE A DECLARATION ACHIEVED -- OR, AT LEAST, VERY REAL PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETING A DECLARATION BEFORE THE DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS RESUME.

Q. YOU SAID BOTH ISRAEL AND EGYPT, IF I UNDERSTOOD YOU CORRECTLY, AGREE THAT AN INTERIM ARRANGEMENT MAY BE NECESSARY FOR THE WEST BANK-GAZA SITUATION. IS THAT THE NARROWING OF THE GAP THAT YOU WERE REFERRING TO LAST WEEK IN THE MIDDLE EAST, OR IS THERE SOMETHING ELSE?

A. NO. THERE'S NO REFERENCE IN THE DECLARATION TO THE INTERIM AGREEMENT. THE DECLARATION IS IN TERMS OF MORE GENERAL PRINCIPLES.

WELL, AGAIN, IT'S HARD TO BE MORE PRECISE WITHOUT GETTING INTO THE TEXT, WHICH I DON'T WANT TO DO. BUT THERE ARE WAYS OF CITING RESOLUTION 242 AS A BASIS FOR NEGOTIATIONS, FOR EXAMPLE. ON THAT I THINK THERE'S LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BEEN SOME NARROWING OF THE GAP. THERE HAS BEEN SOME NARROWING ON THE WITHDRAWAL LANGUAGE. IT HASN'T BEEN OVERCOME. THE PEACE LANGUAGE IS LARGELY AGREED, ALTHOUGH THERE ARE A COUPLE OF TEXTUAL DIFFERENCES THERE. IT'S IN THE PALESTINIAN LANGUAGE AND NEXT IN THE WITHDRAWAL LANGUAGE THAT THE WIDEST GAPS EXIST. ON THE PALESTINIAN LANGUAGE I WOULD SAY THERE'S BEEN NO NARROWING OF THE GAP. ON WITHDRAWAL LANGUAGE WE'VE MADE A LITTLE PROGRESS.

Q. MAY I JUST FOLLOW THAT UP QUICKLY? YOU KIND OF GIVE THE IMPRESSION EARLY ON, WHEN YOU TALKED ABOUT THE PEACE

LANGUAGE AND THE SECURITY LANGUAGE, THAT THE EGYPTIANS HAVE BEEN VERY FLEXIBLE AND HAVE INDEED MADE SOME CONCESSIONS. HAS THE REVERSE BEEN TRUE AS WELL? HAVE THE ISRAELIS, IN YOUR SHUTTLE TRIPS -- I MEAN I GET THE IMPRESSION THAT THE EGYPTIANS, SORT OF, HAVE BEEN GIVING AND THAT THE ISRAELIS HAVEN'T BEEN GIVING VERY MUCH AT ALL. IS THAT TRUE OR NOT?

A. NO, I WOULDN'T SAY SO. I THINK THAT THERE'S BEEN SOME ATTEMPT TO BRIDGE THE GAPS ON BOTH SIDES.

ON THE PALESTINIAN LANGUAGE, THE ASWAN FORMULA IS ALREADY VIEWED AS AN ATTEMPT TO FIND MIDDLE GROUND BETWEEN THE EGYPTIAN AND THE MORE GENERAL ARAB POSITION THAT THERE SHOULD BE SELF-DETERMINATION WITHOUT ANY QUALIFICATIONS, AND THE ISRAELI POSITION THAT SELF-DETERMINATION WOULD LEAD TO AN INDEPENDENT RADICAL STATE AND, THEREFORE, THERE SHOULDN'T BE ANY SELF-DETERMINATION. SO ASWAN IS ALREADY --

Q. HOW MUCH OF THAT HAS ISRAEL ACCEPTED?

A. WELL, I HONESTLY CAN'T TRY TO GET INTO THE MATHEMATICS OF THIS.
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Q. I'D LIKE TO ASK YOU ON YOUR STATEMENT ABOUT BOTH SIDES AGREEING THAT THERE SHOULD BE AN INTERIM SOLUTION FOR THE WEST BANK. CAN I JUST QUESTION THAT? DOESN'T BEGIN REALLY STILL STICK BY HIS SELF-RULE FORMULA AND THAT PART 26, WHICH TALKS ABOUT A REVIEW WITHIN FIVE YEARS -- HAS HE GONE BEYOND THAT TO ACCEPT YOUR CONCEPT THAT THIS IS ONLY A FIVE-YEAR PLAN AND EVERYTHING ELSE IS UP FOR GRABS?

A. NO. HE STILL STANDS ON THE SELF-RULE PROPOSAL THAT HE PUT FORWARD. BUT BY ITS OWN TERMS IT DOES NOT PRETEND TO BE A FINAL SOLUTION. IT SAYS AT THE END OF FIVE YEARS THERE WILL BE A REVIEW.

NOW, THE WAY THAT REVIEW IS DESCRIBED HAS BEEN CONSIDERED INADEQUATE BY THE ARABS BECAUSE IT DOESN'T SEEM TO, FROM THEIR POINT OF VIEW, LEAVE OPEN WHAT IS OBVIOUSLY THEIR OBJECTIVE -- WHICH IS THAT THERE WILL BE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM THESE AREAS -- AND THEY WOULD REVERT TO ARAB CONTROL AND ARAB AUTHORITY. BUT I THINK IN ALL HONESTY THE PLAN IS A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION. IT OFFERS THE CONCEPT OF AN ISRAEL REVIEW OF AN INTERIM AGREEMENT. THE BEGIN SELF-RULE PLANS OFFERS THE CONCEPT OF AN INTERIM AGREEMENT. IT DOES NOT ASSERT NOW THE

ISRAELI CLAIM TO SOVEREIGNTY.

IT DOES PROVIDE FOR AN END TO THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT AND A NEW REGIME FOR THE WAY IN WHICH THE AREA WILL BE GOVERNED WITH THE POPULATION PARTICIPATING IN IMPORTANT, IF NOT ALL, ELEMENTS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE AREA.

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WE'VE NEVER SAID THIS IS THE ANSWER, BUT WE'VE ALWAYS SAID THAT IT PROVIDES AT LEAST A BASIS FROM WHICH THE NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD PROCEED.

Q. HE ALSO SAID, AS YOU KNOW, WHEN HE EXPLAINED IT TO THE KNESSET, THAT THERE WOULD NEVER BE AN END OF ISRAELI SECURITY FORCES IN THE AREA.

A. I RECOGNIZE THAT.

Q. HAS HE ALTERED THAT POINT? THAT'S WHAT I'M TRYING TO GET AT. HE HASN'T DROPPED THAT PLAN?

A. NO, NO. I THINK THAT THIS PLAN, AS PUT FORWARD, IS STILL THE PLAN FROM THE ISRAELI POINT OF VIEW. I SPOKE EARLIER AND EMPHASIZED -- OR TRIED TO EMPHASIZE -- THAT WE RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE, AND I THINK UNDERSTAND AND SUPPORT THE IMPORTANCE, ISRAEL ATTACHES TO THE SECURITY ASPECTS OF THE WEST BANK AND GAZA. THIS IS A VALID SECURITY PROBLEM, AND WE THINK ANY INTERIM AGREEMENT HAS TO TAKE THIS INTO ACCOUNT.

THE IDEA OF ISRAELI SECURITY FORCES BEING THERE DURING THE INTERIM PERIOD IS ONE THAT WE CERTAINLY THINK DESERVES VERY SERIOUS AND FAIR CONSIDERATION, FOR EXAMPLE.

Q. WE HAVEN'T BROUGHT UP YET SOMETHING WHICH IS QUITE LIKELY TO OVERHAND THIS, AND THAT IS THE ARMS-PACKAGE DEAL. WHERE DO YOU SEE THAT AS AFFECTING THESE TALKS?

A. YOU KNOW, I'M IN THE HAPPY POSITION OF HAVING BEEN AWAY FOR THE LAST FEW WEEKS. MY DISCUSSIONS HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH ARMS. I HAVE BEEN FOCUSING ON THE NEGOTIATING SITUATION, THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS; AND I WOULD RATHER NOT GET INTO THAT KIND OF SPECULATIVE LINE, PARTICULARLY SINCE

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I'M NOT SURE I'M FULLY UP TO DATE ON IT.

Q. WOULD YOU ACCEPT THE IDEA THAT IT DOES CHANGE THE ATMOSPHERE FOR THE TALKS THAT BEGIN IS GOING TO HAVE WITH CARTER?

A. I DON'T, NO. LET'S WAIT AND SEE. THIS IS NOT, FROM

OUR POINT OF VIEW, THE FOCAL POINT OF THESE DISCUSSIONS.
THE DEFENSE MINISTER HAS BEEN HERE TO TALK ABOUT ARMS.
I CAN'T -- I'M NOT GOING TO SAY THAT IT'S NOT GOING TO
COME UP. I T MAY VERY WELL COME UP. BUT, FROM OUR
POINT OF VIEW, IT OUGHT NOT TO BE A FACTOR IN THE
NEGOTIATING PROCESS OR IN THE ISSUES THAT HAVE TO BE
DEALT WITH IF THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS IS GOING TO MVOE
FORWARD.

OFFICIAL: I THINK THAT'S IT.

THANK YOU.

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